

AMENDMENT TO THE ABSTRACT

Please amend the abstract to read:

Control of a serial communications path is maintained (i.e., the connection is held open) as long as a minimum amount of data, which optionally is determined by programming (called a "programmable amount of data"), is available for transmission, in order to reduce the overall amount of time spent opening the connection to the serial communications path. The system includes a serial device having  $n$  ports (where  $n$  equals one or more), each port supporting a serial communications path. Each port arbitrates for control of that port's attached serial communications path. The system also includes an arbitration-and-control apparatus, wherein control of the serial communications path, once control is achieved, is maintained by the arbitration-and-control apparatus as long as a predetermined amount of data is available within control of the serial device. In addition, a method to reduce connection overhead is described.